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Since the evolution of man as \textit{Homo sapiens} to invasion in space, we have come a long way. In this era of globalization, India is uprising at a fast pace and becoming a new world power. Productivity in the country adds to this progressive process. Correct career choice attributes a lot towards the productivity as career decisions taken by an individual at this stage forms the base for the future decision taken in the field of work.

Effective career decision-making is a difficult and complex process which involves a large number of decisions over a span of time. Choosing one’s career is not an easy task due to the complex and fluid character of the world of work. It is that developmental process which takes man years to reach the ultimate decision which is determined by a sequence of inter-dependent decisions about which an individual may or may not be conscious. If an individual learns decision making early in life, he is capable to survive more successfully and is more fit in the world of work.

Jones (1973) views that although life goal provides the center of all the activities and gives meaning to life, a satisfactory and successful life is often dependent on the wise choice of an occupation.

Decision regarding choosing an occupation is not an intellectual process involving all possibilities in a logical manner rather it is based on the interaction of maturity with regards to career, social background, interests and many other factors.

Wide subject choices, multiplicity of courses—all tend to bewilder the students at the crucial adolescent age after tenth grade. This is not an individual problem but the whole society suffers from it if a
wrong decision is taken. The correct educational and vocational decisions taken at this stage forms the base for future decisions to be taken in the world of work later by an individual. So, the education must be related to the needs and aspirations of the society in order to produce more.

The process of occupational choice has been traced by Ginzberg et al. (1957) through stages based on the characteristics of choice or the presumed determinants of choice. They came to the result that the individual tends to make his choices with emphasis upon different factors at different age levels. Their approach was developmental and is described as follows; “Our basic assumption is that an individual never reaches the ultimate decision at a single moment in time, but through a series of decisions over a period of many years; the cumulative effect is the determining factor”. Three periods in the determination of occupational choice were identified. These are; (i) Period of Fantasy Choices (Between ages 6 years and 11 years approximately); (ii) Period of Tentative Choices (During Adolescence) and (iii) Period of Realistic Choices (Early Adulthood)

During the ‘fantasy period’, the youngster thinks about an occupation in terms of his wish to be an adult. Here, he is unable to assess his capacities or the opportunities and limitations of reality. He believes that he can be whatever he wants to be. His translations are arbitrary.

An individual’s recognition of the problem of deciding on a future occupation is the character of the ‘tentative period’. The solution must be sought in terms of probable future satisfactions. However the translation is still almost exclusively in terms of subjective factors: interests, capacities and values. In fact, an individual starts realizing that an effective decision requires the incorporation of reality considerations.
The ‘realistic period’ is the next stage where the translation is so heavily weighed by reality considerations that an individual recognizes that he must work out a compromise between what he wants and the opportunities which are available for him.

Thus, an individual proceeds from his early fantasy-loaded choices through choices based upon his interests, capacities and values to the crystallization and specification of one choice which he implements by entering an occupation.

The adolescents after tenth grade face the problem of choosing suitable educational courses leading to vocational choices. Right vocational choice not only helps in increasing the nation's productivity by utilizing the nation's human resources but also leads to personal growth and satisfaction of an individual.

Vocational education helps an individual to score a job or be his own master by starting his own productive activity. This stage is more meaningful to those who do not want to go beyond the plus two stage and can gain an employment. Hence vocational stream after tenth grade aims to divert large number of students to the world of work. So the choice of correct stream and subject after tenth grade involves the investment of both mental and economic resources. Realizing the importance of career education, National Policy on Education (1986) introduced 10+2+3 system in India. Under this, the first stage involves ten years of schooling for all. It contains core-curriculum, general education with emphasis on science and mathematics with the addition of new subjects like work experience, physical education and aesthetic activities. After this, at plus two stage or senior secondary stage, diversification of academic and vocational streams occurs. The academic stream involves varied subjects like arts, science or commerce in which students can pursue their higher studies too. And if once a decision is taken, it is difficult to alter it.
Although educational and vocational decisions are made by an individual but they are greatly influenced by the expectations of society, family and peers. If immature and unplanned career decisions are taken at this stage then this would ultimately increase the wastage of human resources and would burden the Indian economy. Also, to help the adolescents steer their vocational and educational career in fruitful direction and to save them from unnecessary frustrations, correct decision should be taken after tenth grade.

1.1 CAREER MATURITY

Choosing an appropriate vocation by one self has been considered one of the hallmarks of career maturity ever since Parsons (1909) referred to it as “true reasoning” in the process of career decision making. The concept of career maturity became popular through the famous Career Pattern Study Monograph II entitled “The Vocational Maturity of Ninth Grade Boys” by Super and Overstreet (1960). This longitudinal study extending over a period of 21 years and involving ninth grade boys attending school in Middle town, New York, consisted of an analysis of the maturity of vocational thinking, behaviour, abilities and traits of high school boys, their transition from school to work and other exploratory behaviours. Choosing an appropriate occupation by oneself is considered as one of the hallmarks of career maturity that is required in the process of career decisions making.

Super (1955) was first to introduce the concept of career maturity. According to Super (1955), “Career maturity refers to the individual’s degree of readiness to choose, to plan and to prepare for future vocation. It is a pre-requisite ability to make a wise choice towards particular occupation and represents development along a continuum. Greater the maturity, greater is likelihood that individual is able to cope with developmental tasks at different stages of
vocational development. It is not thought of as a static goals an ideal and result which has been achieved”.

According to Crites (1978) career maturity involves forming interests, making consistent and competent choices and developing attitudes towards careers.

Ginzberg et al. (1951) maintained that to some degree the way in which a young person deals with his occupational choice is indicative of his general maturity and conversely, in assessing the latter, consideration must be given to the way in which he is handling his occupational choice problems.

Crites (1961) described it as the construct that refers to the maturity of an individual’s vocational behaviour as indicated by the similarity between his behaviour and that of the oldest individual in his vocational life stage. He further defined vocational maturity as a point in the continuum of vocational development which implies more than a change although it is certainly a necessary condition for the maturation of vocational behaviour.

If vocational development is a continuum and vocational maturity a point on this continuum, it becomes imperative to specify the dimensions along which vocational development takes place and vocational maturity is measured.

Super and Overstreet (1960) and subsequently, their students and associates, conducted within the context of Super’s programmatic Career Pattern Study examined five dimensions by means of several indices. These dimensions are: (i) Orientation of vocational choice consisting of CONCERN with choice, use of resources in orientation and general occupational information; (ii) Information and planning about preferred occupation consisting of specificity of information and planning about the preferred occupation, and extent of planning activity; (iii) Consistency of vocational preference i.e. the extent to
which one’s vocational preferences are consistent over a period of
time, within occupational fields, within occupational levels and within
occupational families; (iv) Crystallization of traits including indices
such as interest maturity, vocational independence, realism of
attitudes towards work, degree of patterning of measured interests,
and work values; and (v) Wisdom of vocational preferences consisting
of the relationship between abilities and preferences, activities and
interests.

Later, Super et al. (1979) gave six psychologically meaningful
dimensions, which were arrived at using research data on Career
Development Inventory Form III (1971). These dimensions are: (i)
Extent of planning referring to planfulness; (ii) Use and evaluation of
resources in exploration; (iii) Career decisions – making referring to
the student’s knowledge and application of career decision – making
principles; (iv) Career development information; (v) World of work
information; and (vi) Information about the preferred occupation.

An individual’s vocational maturity, then, can be defined by his
standing along these dimensions in relation to either chronological age
and expected life stage or the behaviour of others and also coping with
the same developmental tasks Super et al. (1957). An individual’s
vocation or career maturity reflect his readiness to make vocational
decisions called for by society revealed by method of coping with
developmental tasks, which are occupational in nature Super (1964).

Greater the maturity, greater is the likelihood of making wise,
realistic and satisfactory decisions with regard to career choices.

Super (1980) explains career maturity as the knowledge of one’s
career interests abilities and goals in relation to the world of work.
Super and Nevill (1984) stresses the attitudinal and cognitive
readiness to cope with developmental tasks of finding, preparing for,
getting established in, pursuing and retiring from an occupation as constituents of career maturity.

According to Gottfredson (1986) talks of risk factors in career maturity are attributes of the person or the person’s relation to the environment that are associated with a higher than average probability of experiencing the types of problems under consideration. The repertoire of behaviour necessary to identifying, choosing, planning or executing career goals available in specific individuals may vary from those possessed by a more appropriate peer group in career developmental for one’s age.

Lester (1989) defined career maturity as involving information, planning, usability and a need is apparent to target career information to educational and professional goals.

Super (1990) defined career maturity as the individual’s readiness to successfully cope with the developmental tasks at any given stage of life career and the expectations placed on him by the society. For adolescents, it is the stage of exploration in Super's theory when they are required to master the tasks of defining their self concept their self concept and related it to the world of work. During this period they are increasing their decisions making skills and ability to realize what they can and cannot do and the knowledge of the world of work Fouad and Keeley (1992).

Spokane (1991) considers that career maturity is based on the direct assistance given to an individual to promote more effective decision making, intensive counselling to help resolve career difficulties; enhancement of person’s career development to enable him to make more effective career decision.

Chickering and Reisser (1993) opine that a solid sense of self is the underpinning for clarifying plan and aspiration in the planning phase of career decision making particularly when late adolescents are establishing their identity.
Kelly (1996) emphasizes, “choosing a career is a life long process that demands accurate perceptions of ability, potential and achievement”.

Watts (1996) states that, “Many career choices must be made during the life span requiring much thought and reflection in the decision making. A life long approach to career development is needed as career plans are based on a long series of iterative decision made throughout our lives. Career plans must be constantly revised to adapt to a continually changing world”.

Ospiow and Fitzgerald (1996) define career development as a science embedded in the delivery of career guidance and career counselling as components of career education which is the infusion of mulicultural sensitivity into career delivery systems.

To sum up, we can say that career maturity is not a single act, it is rather a continuous process. It is related with knowledge, ability information, aspiration, attitude, planning and usability. It finds its roots in the early life of a person and develops over a period of years. Hence, it is a maturing process of learning ability oneself and one’s choice options.

The career development theories can broadly be classified into two types (i) Structural Theories: They focus on individual characteristics and occupational tasks; (ii) Development Theories: They focus on human developments across life span.

1.1.1 Structural Theories

• Trait and factor

This theory began with Parson (1909), who proposed that a choice of vocation depended upon; (i) A clear understanding of oneself, one’s aptitudes, abilities, interests, ambitions, resources, limitations; (ii) A thorough knowledge of the requirements and conditions of success, advantages and disadvantages, compensation opportunities
and prospects in different lines of work; and (iii) True reasoning on the relations of these two groups of acts.

The basis in trait and factor theory is the assumption that there are unique traits that can be reliably measured and that it is possible to match individual traits to occupational requirements.

Williamson (1965) emerged as the strongest proponent of the theory and suggested six steps in the process of career counseling based on the trait factor approach viz. analysis, synthesis, diagnosis, prognoses counseling, and follow up.

- **Holland’s Vocational Personalities and Environments theory:**

This typology theory was developed to organize the people in different jobs and the data about different work environments, to suggest how people make career choices and to explain how job satisfaction and vocational achievement occur. Holland (1985) suggested that people can function and develop best and find job satisfaction in work environments that are compatible with their personalities. Holland (1985) based his theory of personality types on four working assumptions. (i) Most persons can be characterized by one of six types: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising and conventional (often referred by the acronym RIASEC); (ii) There are six model environments: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, and conventional (often referred to by the acronym RIASEC); (iii) People search for environments that will let them exercise their skills and abilities, express their attitudes and values, and take on agreeable problems and roles; and (iv) Behaviour is determined by an interaction between personality and environment.

People tend to choose a career that is reflective of their personality. He suggests that closer the match of personality to job, the greater the satisfaction.
A brief description of personality types as suggested by Holland is given below;

(i) Realistic: A realistic individual prefers activities that involve systematic manipulation of objects, machinery tools and animals and is averse to social skills like educational and therapeutic.

(ii) Investigative: The investigative type of a person shows a preference for activities involving observational, analytical, systematic and creative competencies as against low preference for persuasive, social, repetitive activities.

(iii) Artistic: Such types of people show tendencies to be expressive non-conventional, unsystematic, original and introspective. They are averse to systematic activities like clerical and mechanical in nature.

(iv) Social: These people have an interest in human relations. They prefer working with others to inform, train, develop, cure or enlighten them. They avoid ordered, systematic activities involving materials, tools and machines.

(v) Enterprising: These people enjoy activities involving manipulations of others to attain organizational goals or economic gains but avoid symbolic and systematic activities.

(vi) Conventional: Their preference is for ordered systematic manipulation of data and filing records. They are averse to ambiguous, exploratory activities.

Holland developed a hexagon model that illustrates relationship between various personality types or between environmental models. He also elaborated upon some of the secondary assumptions, which he calls key concepts that described his theory.
(vii) Consistency: Consistency is the degree of relatedness between personality types and between environmental models. Some pairs and types have more in common than other pairs.

(viii) Differentiation: Differentiation is the degree to which a person is well defined. Persons and environments differ in the degree to which they are differentiated and saturated. A well differentiated person will show distinctly higher rating on minimum number of types. A person or environment, which resembles many types, is poorly differentiated.

(ix) Identity: Identity refers to the clarity and stability of goals, interests, talents etc in case of persons. Environmental identity is revealed through the organization’s clarity, stability and integration of goals, tasks and long standing system of rewards. A person’s identity is related to the extent of differentiation of his/her profile and environmental identity is related to the level of saturation in the type of occupational activity.

(x) Congruence: Congruence is defined as correspondence between personality type and environment. Different types
require different environments to flourish. Incongruence occurs when a type lives in an environment that provides opportunities and rewards not in line with his/her characteristics like preferences, abilities etc. The hexagon can be used to determine the degree of congruence between an individual’s high point code and the environment. Proximity of types and models in the hexagon is indicative of the degree of congruence between types and models.

According to Holland (1985), the relationship between types or environments can be ordered according to a hexagonal model in which the distances between the types or environments are inversely proportional to the theoretical relationships between them. The hexagon provides a graphic representation of the degree of consistency within or between or person and an environment. Holland’s theory places emphasis on the accuracy of self-knowledge and career information necessary for career decision making.

Although the theory appears to be applicable to both male and female workers, there is some question of gender bias in that most females frequently tend to score predominately in there personality types; artistic, social and conventional. Holland suggests that in our sexist society, females will display greater interest in female dominated occupations.

• **Socio-Economic theory:**

Sociologist and economists provide detailed explanations and descriptions of how one’s culture, family background, social and economic conditions and other factors outside an individual’s control strongly influence one’s identity, values, and overall human and career development. Socioeconomic theory is also known as the “chance” or “accident” theory. This approach to understand career development suggests that many people follow the path of least
resistance in their career development by simply falling into whatever work opportunities happen to come their way (Improved Career Decision Making (ICDM) in a Changing World, 1996).

1.1.2 Development Theories

- **Super’s theory:**

  Super, who was a giant in the career development field, tried to understand the various determinants of career development. His findings eventually resulted in a “segmental theory’ to explain career development. Many of his insights came from the Career Pattern Study, a quarter-of-a-century longitudinal study of more than 100 men from the ninth grade through 35 years of age and beyond, as they went about occupational choice, preparation, and participation, in work (Herr and Cramer, 1992).

  Socioeconomic factors, mental and physical abilities, personal characteristics and the opportunities to which persons are exposed determine career patterns. People seek career satisfaction through work roles in which they can express themselves and implement and develop their self-concepts. Career maturity, a main concept in Super’s theory is manifested in the successful accomplishment of age and stage developmental tasks across the life span (ICDM, 1996).

  One representation of his career development theory is the Life stages and Sub-stages model (Super, 1990) that suggests that people move through the stages of Birth, Growth, Exploration, Establishment, Maintenance, Decline and Death, and encounter, various developmental tasks along the way. The extent to which one is ready to cope with these tasks is an indication of the individual’s career maturity. As one moves through these stages, various factors influence his or her ability to cope with developmental tasks. These are represented by A Segmental Model of Career Development (Super, 1990).
The right side of this arch consists of geographical factors that influence career development, including the community one comes from and lives in, schools attended, the family, peer groups, the economy, society, the labor market, social policy, and how all this interacts to affect employment practices. The left side of the arch portrays biological matters that influence development consisting of one’s needs, intelligence values, attitudes, interests and special aptitudes, all of which come together to represent personality and the resulting achievements of the individual.

The factors represented on both sides of the arch influence how one copes with developmental tasks at each stage of his or her development, and they affect role self-concepts. All of this is brought together through decision making by the self which is the key stone of the arch.

Figure -1. 2 : A Segmental Model Of Career Development

![Diagram of a Segmental Model of Career Development](image-url)
Another example of Super’s attempts to integrate what is known about career development into a holistic perspective of the process is The Life-Career Rainbow (Super, 1990), a model that portrays the dimensions of one’s life career from birth until death.

**Figure-1.3 : The Life-Career Rainbow: Six Life Roles In Schematic Life Space**

The Rainbow suggests that, as one moves through various stages of career development, copes with development, tasks, and makes decisions influenced by geographical and biological factors, he or she engages in six life roles. These include child, student, leisurite citizen worker, and homemaker with how much commitment and involvement one participates in these roles, affects the individual’s future career development.

Although Super originally presented the stages and tasks in a sequential manner, he later added that we cycle and recycle throughout our life span as we adapt to changes in ourselves as well as to the trends in the work place.
• **Krumboltz’s social learning theory:**

Much growth takes place as a result of learning and imitating the behaviour of others. Krumboltz developed a theory of career decision making and career development based on social learning or environmental conditions and events, genetic influences and learning experiences. People choose their careers based on what they have learnt. Certain behaviours are modeled, rewarded and reinforced (ICDM, 1996).

• **Decision-making theories:**

Some decision making theories hypothesize that there are critical points in our lives when choices are made that greatly influence our career development. These decision making points are such events as educational choices, entry level job positions, changing jobs, etc. Other decision making theories are concerned with ongoing choices across the life span. According to Gellat (1989), we make our decisions based upon what is actual and what is actual is never static. The decisions that we make are influenced by our awareness of the choices that are available to us and our knowledge of evaluating them. (ICDM, 1996).

• **Cognitive theories:**

Cognitive theories of career development are built around how individuals process, integrate and react to information. The ways in which individuals process information are determined by their cognitive structures. These structures influence how individuals see themselves, others and the environment. Cognitive theories suggests ways to help individuals to build or refine a hierarchy of thinking and decision making skills that influence career development. (ICDM, 1996).
The development of a person through stages of maturity parallels the educational and vocational choice processes. These two processes interact with each other. In the continuity of career development, educational and vocational choices are seen as a series of acts forming crucial factors for personal development. The personality of an individual has an essential influence on decisions as picking up a choice behaviour involves a series of inter dependent decisions, which are to some extent irreversible and are intimately tied to an individual. These decisions occur or are taken with determination at various stages. Super (1957) concluded that an individual is, more or less, conscious of his vocational decision-making, depending upon the stage of his development.

Choices made by young people affect who they are and what they do especially choices of what courses to take in high school or whether to go to college (Adelman, 1994). In our school system, boys and girls are expected to choose at the senior secondary stage, a particular stream from vocational and academic group. These choices are legitimately viewed as pre-vocational or career choices. The students who opt for academic stream have to make a decision regarding the pursuance of higher studies in the field of arts, science or commerce. On the other hand, the vocational stream aims to divert large number of students to the world of work by attracting them to need based, region-specific vocational courses.

The educational/ vocational decisions made by the students at senior secondary stage determine their future roles in the world of work. Adequate decisions not only lead to personal growth and satisfaction, but also help in making the best use of nation’s human resources. As Ross and Ross (1957) view that a well-chosen vocation spells out not only efficiency but also happiness. Vocational development is, therefore a necessary concomitant of overall growth and development.
Super’s (1957) view is that vocational development is one aspect of the individual’s progress that is an essential as social, emotional and intellectual development. It has distinctive characteristics that reveal the way in which general development of the individual manifests. Like other aspects of development, vocational development must be conceived of as beginning early in life and proceeding along a normal curve until late in life (Super et al. 1957). Super placed emphasis on Career Development as a process of Self Concept Implementation. The process of vocational development is essentially that of developing and implementing a self-concept; it is a compromise process in which the self-concept is a product of the interaction of inherited aptitudes, neural and endocrine make up, opportunity to play various roles and evaluations to the extent to which the results of role playing meet with the approval of superiors and fellows (Super, 1957).

The concept of vocational development leads logically to that of vocational maturity, which has been central to theoretical, and research activities concerning Career pattern study. The Career pattern study is related to the work of a number of researchers in vocational choice and adjustment career development and career education (Super 1955; Super and Overstreet, 1960). Super (1957) elaborated upon the theory of career development and introduced the concept of career maturity as “the place reached on the continuum of vocational development from exploration to decline” Career maturity is thus the degree that one has reached in cognitive, emotional, and other psychological factors whereby one acquires the capacity of making realistic and mature career choices. Career development is self-development viewed in relation to choice, entry, and progress in educational and vocational pursuits (Tiedman and O'Hara, 1963). Career maturity is defined as the life stage in which the individual actually is, as evidenced by the developmental tasks with which he is dealing in relation to the life stage in which he is expected to be, in
terms of his age (Super et al., 1957). Career maturity, thus, indicates the degree of development reached by an individual as evidenced by his ability to deal successfully in terms of his age with the developmental tasks expected of him. Vocational development, thus, finds culmination in career maturity, which is the ability to plan and make judicious choice of future vocation.

1.1.3 Factors Affecting Career Maturity

Although an individual makes educational and vocational choices, they are certainly influenced by many environmental and psychological factors.

(i) Environment Factors

- Culture: The cultural milieu in which an individual lives affects his freedom by exerting the influence of the existing social patterns. Various conditions and modes of living in different cultures induce their members to take up jobs, in consonance with their prevailing systems and value structures. (Madan, 1984)

- Social Class: The social class affects an individual’s vocational development by its influence on his becoming the kind of person he is and by the effects of the general socio-economic milieu of the family on the young person’s attitudes, values, opportunities, and the reactions of others towards him. (Jersild, 1967).

- Family: Parental education, family harmony, parent-child interaction, all affects career maturity of an individual. McNair and Brown (1983) indicated that the best set of predictors of vocational maturity was parental influence.

- School: Mac Caffrey (1980) found that students who had a high degree of participation in those extra-curricular activities which emphasized individual responsibility and a positive response to
social expectation were more likely to evidence high levels of vocational tasks and dimensions as correlated with vocational behaviour.

- **Ecological Factors**: Differences between sub-cultures demonstrated along geographical and residential lines are often reflected in the vocational growth of an individual. It is expected that individuals from rural areas lag behind in career maturity than individuals from urban areas due to lack of adequate opportunities.

**(ii) Psychological Factors**

Psychological factors work as catalysts for environmental factors and, however, are essential factors in themselves.

- **Interests**: The strength and direction of the individual’s interest represents an important aspect of his personality. This characteristic effects his educational and vocational pursuits. Interests is an important factor in determining the career-maturity of the students (Trumper, 2006; Wynn and Bledsoe, 2006). Habashi et. al, 2008) indicated that teachers are able to translate students interest in person and things into career interest in a better manner. The, results, provide the evidence that students interests are plastic and able to be shaped.

- **Academic Achievement**: It is a well established fact that those students who have better academic records tend to be vocationally more mature individuals than those whose academic achievement are poor (Cosby, 1974; Parlikar, 1973).

Environmental and psychological factors are helpful in developing realistic educational and vocational self-perceptions of an individual. The integrated person displays an effective balance in his behaviour. Vocational maturity is the result of an interaction of environment and psychological variables.
Super et. al. (1979) identified six factors in vocational maturity:-
(i) Awareness of the need to plan ahead; (ii) Decision-making skills; (iii) Knowledge and use of information resources; (iv) General career information; (v) General world of work information; and (vi) Detailed information about occupations of preference.

Thus, environmental and psychological factors specifically socio-economic status, academic achievement and interests – all play an important role in determining the vocational choice and career maturity of an individual.

- **Personality** : Career development seems to be a reflection of general personality development Gupta (1991) found a positive relationship between some personality factors and career maturity. Individual’s self concept is considered as one of the important components of personality. Positive self concept, self esteem, self actualizing components, personal adjustment, career adjustment etc. are required for healthy adjustment. Career development constitutes an aspect of personal development, which is intimately linked to the formulation and consolidation of mature self – identity.

- **Sex** : Studies examining sex differences on career maturity variables have established that girls are vocationally more mature than boys (Super and Nevill, 1984). Evidence is also available that there are no significant differences among boys and girls in vocational maturity with regard to school samples. Chand (1979), Gupta (1991) and Parlikar (1973) however found sex differences on various dimensions of career maturity.

- **Intelligence** : Many researchers have traced the importance of intelligence in career development and in achieving career maturity. Gupta (1991) found intelligence to be the most significant variable contributing to the prediction of career maturity. Parlikar’s (1973) findings have similar indications.
• Aptitudes: The success of a person in a job or vocational setting depends on his special abilities and his motivations. Cosby (1974) concluded that subjects with high level of intellectual maturity tended to be vocationally more mature than others with lesser mental abilities.

1.2 INTERESTS

Etymologically, the word “interests” in Latin means “It matters”. The search for the individual’s true interests in helping to bring about a wise educational and vocational choice is consistent with the modern educational theory which holds to the idea of interest at the main spring of effort in education. Increasingly, interest is acknowledge as providing the best and strongest motivation for activity in both educational and professional pursuits. Since interests involve reactions to specific things, they must all be learned. Accordingly they may be modified later by re-education. So, we say interests are learned and acquired. There are some interests however, that come very close to being native, if they are not actually inherited such as liking sugar and disliking quinine. But let us disregard these exceptional cases and consider the greater majority of interests. These appear only after experience with things after reacting to objects including persons. An interest is an expression of one’s reaction to his environment. The reaction of liking, disliking results in satisfactory or unsatisfactory dealing with the object. The different people react differently to the same object. The different reaction, we suspect arise because the individuals are different to start with. Thus, interest seems to emerge from the interaction of the individual with experience. To find one’s enduring and deep seated interests, numerous and varied experience must be recommended.

Interest refers to the variety of choices which the individual makes with respect to the activities in which he is engaged. He shows preferences for some and aversion to others. Interest is motivating
force that impels us to attend to a person, a thing or an activity. An interest thus is a tendency to become absorbed in an experience and to continue it.

Interests are one of the important traits of the personality of an individual which have significance for educational and vocational success and satisfaction. These traits are manifested as likes, dislikes, indifferences, preferences and evaluation.

Interests are related to some extent with educational and vocational choices but are too deep seated and too general to be perfect indicators of any such specific outcomes as educational or vocational choices. The knowledge and understanding of a child’s interests become a major factor in educational guidance. An educational plan related to the child’s ability and aptitudes may fall short of realization because it is not consistent with his interests and fails to stimulate the desired application of effort on his part.

Taneja (1989) quoted James as, “Millions of the items of the outward order are present to my senses which never properly enter into my experience. Why? Because they have no interests for me. My experience is what I agree to attend to. Only those items which I notice shape in mind-without selective interest, experience is an utter chaos. Interests alone gives accent and emphasis, light and shade background and foreground - intelligible perspective in a world”.

Interests thus are very important traits of the personality of an individual. At the one extreme is the causal liking or disliking directed towards a single object person, idea or job level. At the other extreme is the definition in which interests are structured out of the individual’s attempts to match his self estimate with the competitive reality of jobs and activities in which he choses to engage or is forced to engage. In other words interest is an expression of like or dislike
towards an object or activity, of moving towards or away from the object or activity.

Strong (1931) says that interests are the sum total of likes and dislikes for a wide range of stimulus objects and activities.

Bingham (1937) writes, “An interest is a tendency to become absorbed in an experience and to continue it”.

Jha (1943) defined interest as that enduring system which sustains, contains and continues the activity called attention.

According to Super (1949) Interest may be defined as a tendency to choose one activity in preference to another, or to seek out an activity or object. “Interests therefore, cover such things as our preferences and diversions or likes and dislikes”.

The term interest has been used by Super and Crites (1950) in following most common ways as follows: (i) Expressed interest; (ii) Manifest interest; (iii) Tested interests; and (iv) Inventories interest.

The interests have certain general features. They are: (i) Interests are an aspect of personality development shaped by both hereditary and environmental factors; and (ii) Vocation and vocational interests appear to run in similar direction for a large portion of individuals. The interests of individuals tend to vary less with the increasing age.

There exists a relationship among abilities, interests and achievement. Strong (1931) describes this relationship by the analogy of a motor boat with rudder. The motor (abilities) determine the speed of the boat, the rudder (interests) determine the direction in which the boat travels by and the distance travelled by the boat (achievement) is a result of the operation of both the motor and the rudder. Hence,
interests is not a separate psychological entity but merely one of the several aspects of the behaviour.

Others factors like intelligence, achievement, socio-economic and cultural factors also play an important part in the development of interests.

There are different types of interest factors as follows: (i) Scientific: Interest in the natural and physical sciences; (ii) Literary: Interest in the use of words and verbal concepts; (iii) Material: Interest in material or concrete things; (iv) Artistic; (v) Musical; (vi) Systematic: Interest in record keeping and computational activities; (vii) Contact: Interest in dealing with people for the sake of material gain; and (viii) Political interests.

1.3 ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Academic achievement is, in general, referred to the degree or level of success or proficiency attained in some specific area concerning scholastic or academic work.

It refers to the scores obtained in the annual examination or refers to the degree or level of success or that of proficiency attained in some specific areas concerning scholastic or academic work. The term ‘academic’ has been derived from the term ‘academy’. The meaning of the term academy is, “a school where special type of instructions are imparted”.

Academic achievement plays an important role in the life of a child. High academic achievement in school builds self-esteem and self confidence which leads to better adjustment with the group. It is the prime and special responsibility of a school or any other educational institute established by society to promote a wholesome scholastic growth and development of a child. The greatness of it depends on the quality and quantity of scholars and intellectual
robots it produces. Its brilliant academic records are deemed to be the most widely used index of its worth and success.

Achievement is the proficiency of performance in a given skill or body of knowledge. It covers up all the fields where learning takes place.

Good (1959) describes achievement as synonymous with the accomplishment or proficiency of performance of individual in a given skill or body of knowledge. Crow and Crow (1969) defined achievement as extent to which learner is profiting form instruction in a given area of learning. Good (1973) in the “Dictionary of Education” referred to academic achievement as “knowledge” attained attained or skill developed in the school subjects, usually designated by test scores or marks assigned by the teacher”.

According to Random House Webster’s College Theasaurus (1997), man’s first walk on the moon was a stunning technological achievement accomplishment, attainment, realization, fulfillment, effort and deed. Playing the piano is just one of the achievements, skill mastery, expertise, command. Academic achievement means those qualities or attributes or characteristics or traits of an individual which contribute to or have a direct learning or effect or influence on the accomplishment or proficiency of performance pertaining to any activity scholastic in nature or any scholarly activity.

The prediction of academic achievement has assumed enormous importance in view of its practical view. It forms the main basis of admission and promotion in a class. It is also important for attaining a degree and getting a job. Success in life may have a pervasive effect on the students personality. As a young person improves his achievement, he develops his powers and his self-confidence increases, the way pupils apply themselves in an important factor in scholastic achievement.
Thus, there are various aspects of the concept of academic achievement, which has a great bearing on the personality of a student. From an early age, a sense of achievement is a source of good feeling and self-esteem and failure a source of anger and self-reproach.

Academic achievement may be defined as a measure of knowledge, understanding of skills in a specified subjects or group of subjects. The academic achievement refers to achievement in a separate subject or total scores of several subjects combined. Hence academic achievement is concerned with the quantity and quality of learning attained in a subject or group of subjects, after a period of instructions.

Academic achievements are not uniformly or evenly distributed in the general population. Traditionally, we refer to a student as being a high, low or average achiever on the basis of his performance in the achievement test or the grades that students receives from his teacher. Besides the wide variance in the recorded performances between student’s subjectivity and preference for different subjects also gets reflected in the performances of the same student in different subjects. Even when equal opportunities are provided their is no equality in performance and achievement. Achievement refers to accomplishment. It signifies successfully carried out performance by an individual or a group as assessed after the completion of a task whether it be academic, manual, personal social or extra curricular.

1.4 SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

Socio-economic status refers to social and economic standing. A person who has high standing in the community, has good income and lives in a well furnished house of good quality is said to have a good socio-economic status.
Cronbach (1954) records social structure as a pyramid, with a few familiar having the privileges to go with high social status and a great many families in the undistinguished and under privileged classes.

Biersted (1957) defined status as a position in a society or a group.

English and English (1958) in their Comprehensive Dictionary of Psychological and Psychoanalytical terms defines socio-economic status as “an individual’s position in a given society as determined by wealth, occupation, and social class”.

Barber (1957) contends that social class refers to social stratification. Social stratification indicates that both individual and groups of individual are conceived as forming lower and higher differentiation strata and classes on the basis of some specific or generalized characteristics. The dimensions of social stratification are power, occupation, prestige, wealth, education, family position and local community status etc. The social class of a person represents the group of individuals with whom he associates himself on more or less intimate basis. He shares with them ideas, values, attitudes and ways of conducting himself.

Further, theorists like Ginzberg et al. (1957) state that poor family will accelerate the career aspirations of their off-spring but will not alter the sequence through which he goes in any significant way. In addition the lower class family is likely to be more passive in its general behaviour and attitudes than middle or upper class families and thus its members may try to exert less direct influence on their children’s career pattern than upper and middle class people Crites (1969).
According to MacIver and Page (1955) socio-economic position is the scale that determines its possessors, apart from its personal attributes or special device, a degree of respect and prestige.

Socio-economic status has usually been confined to five components: (i) Education of the parents and other members of the family; (ii) Profession of the parents and others; (iii) Income of the family from all sources; (iv) Size of the family; and (v) Total socio-economic status of the family.

Kulshreshtha (1987) defined socio-economic status as any group of persons coming closer to each other on the continuum of occupation, education, caste and culture.

Good (1973) defined socio-economic status as, “the level indicative of both the social and the economic position of an individual or group”. Davis (1968) regards status as “an identity within a situation”. Green (1963) the sociologist, defines it, “position in a social group or grouping in relation to other positions held by other individuals in a group or grouping”. Thus socio-economic status refers to social and economic standing. A person who was high standing in the community and has good income and who lives in a well-furnished house of good quality and has ample opportunities is said to have good socio-economic status.

Socio-economic status is an individual’s standing in terms of his social and financial position in relation to others. It is a different way to look at the social structure of a society.

Mac Iver and Page (1955) defined socio-economic status as a position on the scale. It determines for its possessors, apart from its personal attributes or special service, a degree of respect, and influence.
In his work ‘Capital’ Marx (1954) talks extensively about socio-economic formation. He explains the emergence of classes, their causes and consequences. He specifies five socio-economic formations; (i) Primitive community; (ii) Slavery; (iii) Feudalism; (iv) Capitalism; and (v) Communism

Hollingshed et al. (1958) developed a scheme to determine the social status of a person. His index of social position utilizes three factors; (i) Occupation; (ii) Education; and (iii) Ecological areas of residence.

Each of these factors is scaled and assigned a weight determined by a standard regression equation. According to New Webster’s Dictionary and Thesaurus (1992) socio-economic status is a person’s position in any given group, society or culture as determined by wealth, occupation, education and social class where social class is the grouping of the people on a scale of prestige in a society according to their social status. It is determined by many factors such as occupation, income, moral standing, family history, social grouping and organization, type of schooling and area of residence.

According to Kuppusswamy (1981) the estimation of socio-economic status is based on three assumptions; (i) There is a class structure in the society; (ii) Status positions are mainly determined by a few commonly accepted characteristic; and (iii) These characteristic can be scaled and combined by using statistical procedures.

Socio-economic status can be defined as a position which, apart from its personal attributes or special service, determines for its possessors, a degree of respect, prestige and influence. Further, it can be said that socio-economic status refers to the relationship between the individual and the racial set up in which he propagates. It encompasses the entire social environment that is provided to the individual and attitudes to a cluster of factors including his
occupation income, cultural features of home, religion beliefs, family relationships, living standards, case etc.

1.5 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

“CAREER MATURITY IN RELATION TO INTERESTS, ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS”.

1.6 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the career maturity of secondary school students in relation to different interests namely - Influential: Administrative, Enterprising; Venturous: Defence, Sports; Artistic: Creative, Performing; Scientific: Medical, Technical; Analytical: Expressive, Computational; Social: Humanitarian, Education; Nature; Clerical.

2. To study the career maturity of secondary school students in relation to academic achievement.

3. To study the career maturity of secondary school students in relation to socio-economic status.

4. To study the gender difference in the career maturity of secondary school students.

5. To compare the career maturity of secondary school students belonging to general, schedule caste and other backward class.

6. To compare the career maturity of secondary school students of academic and vocational streams.

7. To study the relationship of career maturity with the interests, academic achievement, socio-economic status.

1.7 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The present study under investigation was delimited to the following factors:
1. Due to constraints of time, resources and other factors, the present study was delimited with respect to the sample size, school, sample taken from Class XI students only.

2. The study was confined to the Union Territory of Chandigarh only.

3. From all the Government and Private managed schools of Chandigarh only Government Senior Secondary Schools under CBSE System were selected.

4. It was further delimited to include only those Government Senior Secondary Schools which offer all the academic streams and a minimum of three vocational courses.

5. Schools were selected to include at least two boys, two girls and two co-educational schools.

6. The present investigation was also delimited to study only the variables of interests, academic achievement and socioeconomic status affecting career maturity.

### 1.8 OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF THE TERMS

**i) Career Maturity**

Career maturity denotes the place reached on the continuum of career development from early exploratory years to early adulthood reflecting on consistency of career choices in relation to personal capabilities and employment opportunities and effectiveness in dealing with the problems which rise in the course of career development as measured by Indian adaptation of Career Maturity Inventory (CMI) by Dr. (Mrs.) Nirmala Gupta (1989).

**ii) Interests**

Interests refer to the mental conditions of an individual to voluntarily seek an activity or continue in an activity in different broad vocational areas namely Influential, Venturous, Artistic, Scientific,
iii) Academic Achievement

It refers to the degree or level of success or that of proficiency attained in scholastic or academic work as measured by Annual Examination marks obtained by secondary school students in tenth grade examinations conducted by CBSE.

iv) Socio Economic Status

It refers to social and economic standing i.e. the level indicative of both the social and economic achievement of an individual or a group as measured by Socio-Economic Status Scale (SESS) by Dr. (Mrs.) Meenakshi (2004).

1.9 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The present educational system in India follows 10+2+3 pattern and career decision starts taking shape at the pre tenth stage of an adolescent. The career choice is influenced by career maturity of an individual. Alongwith this, other factors like wide subject choices, multiplicity of courses after tenth grade examination, adolescent developmental changes, expectations of parents and society, conflict regarding selection of one’s career—all tend to bewilder the students. According to the recommendations of National Policy on Education (1986), school curriculum has been diversified into academic and vocational streams after tenth. The correct educational and vocational decisions taken at this stage forms the base for future decisions taken by individual in the world of work. This is the crucial stage when he comes out of the world of fantasies and begins to exercise his choice of work according to his aptitude, abilities, interest etc. This is the stage when students face an unsaid pressure from their parents while selecting their career and sometimes this leads them on a wrong path.
The stage after tenth grade examination leads adolescents on cross roads, which provides an opportunity for them to choose and proceed in wrong as well as in right direction equally. If immature and unplanned career decisions are taken then this would ultimately increase the wastage of human resources and would burden the Indian economy.

This research would be helpful in understanding how various factors influence these decisions. The results of this research would provide guidance to these adolescents and would in a way help to steer their vocational and educational career in a rewarding direction. This would also benefit educational planners and administrators.